

Gen
Le
245





DAVID LEWIS.

MEMOIR of DAVID LEWIS

OF

Springbrook, Esquire,

* AND * *

PHILADELPHIA.

By His Son
David Lewis.

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

AMATEUR PRESS OF EDWARD CONNER.

PHILADELPHIA.

1883

ERRATA.

P. 4, 3d line from bottom, Piquea for "Piqued" — p. 8, 10th line from top, sufficiently for "sufficiently." — p. 10, 5th line from top, insurrection for "insurection"; — 10th line from top, merchants for "merchans" — p. 12, 5th line from bottom, Bishop's Hull for "Hull Bishops" — p. 12, 7th line from bottom, May 22d, 1794, for 179 — p. 13, 13th line from top, instrument for "instrement" — p. 15, 9th and 10th lines from bottom, divide the word request thus, re-quest -- p. 17, footnote *, 3d line from top, presume for "peresume."

M E M O R

* * OF *

DAVID LEWIS.

David Lewis

BORN AT PHILADELPHIA JULY 9, 1766;
DIED, APRIL 28, 1840.

IN the following notice the writer presumes, that, from the social connection of the infancy of our city, these memoirs may take the shape in some degree of family records, and that therefore it may be allowable, in spite of the Horatian precept not to begin the Siege of Troy with Leda's egg, to go back to ancestry and origin, and even to the causes that assembled on the banks of the Delaware, from many lands, those who had left home and country, through impatience of injustice and oppression, and had found a common asylum across the sea.

In the instance of Mr. Lewis, the character of his forefathers in some measure moulded his own; and the traditions of their motives seem most properly a part of the record of his life, as they were of his thoughts

and speech,—especially as they owe to him their preservation.

With this apology, and considering that such matters may not be out of place in a sort of family history of Philadelphia, we will go back to the year 1690, over to North Wales, to the Cader Idris, the mountain tarn, and the Vale of Dolgelly: * one of the most lovely spots on the earth, if "Christopher North" is any judge. In this valley we get the first glimpse of the great-grandfather, Ellis Lewis, on a May Sunday-morning, at a "meeting of Friends," in the house of Lewis Owen. Rowland Owen tells us: "There was a great restraint on their spirits;" but that "silence was broken by a lad of thirteen years of age, imperfect in the English language, by name Ellis Lewis, who came forth in a public testimony to the blessed truth." † However

* Pronounced Dol-geth-lee.

† The above incident occurred in May, 1690, as shown by the text. Nine years afterwards we find his name attached (with Robert Vaughan's, Thomas Cadwalader's and others') to the certificate of worth (given at Hendri-mawr, Wales, 24th, 12th mo., 1699,) which was brought by David Jones to America, and which it appears, according to Dr. Levick (Penna. Magazine Vol. IV., No. 3, pp. 320 and 321, note 3), is registered in the Record Book of Merion Meeting, near Philadelphia. In the paper of Dr. Levick alluded to—"John ap Thomas and his Friends," Penna. Mag.—both Rowland and Lewis Owen are mentioned; a letter from the latter is given, dated Dol-

strange these matters may appear to us, at the present day, it should be remembered that the people called Quakers were entirely in earnest, that their lives and property were of no consideration in comparison to "the things unseen," and that they had set before themselves the noble purpose of making all men friends. Their enthusiasm was a protest against the formalism of the times, and was at least harmless, and may be compared not unfavorably with some of the orthodoxy of that day still in repute; since, about the period of this "coming out," it was busy burning "witches," whipping and hanging women for being "Friends."

This Ellis Lewis came to Pennsylvania in 1708, with a certificate from the Mount Melock meeting, Tyrone,* Ireland, whither he had removed from Wales, and was

gelley, 25th, 4th, mo., 1681.

Further on, at p. 326, Dr. Levick quotes a letter of Hugh Roberts, dated in the year 1697-8, in which the latter states that, being in Merionethshire, he "had a good meeting at James Lewis's, thence to Dolobran, where I received abundance of love from Charles Lloyd and his wife, * * * back to Penllyn, to a meeting at Robert Vaughan's; Ye house, which was one of the greatest in ye country, could not contain I believe one-half of the people. So we kept it out of doors, and a blessed meeting it was."—P. S. P. C.

* I can not find "Mount Melock, Tyrone," in any gazetteer I have consulted. I presume Mount Mellick, a market-town in Queen's Co., Leinster, is meant.—P. S. P. C.

warmly received by the Welsh friends at Haverford, many of them probably relatives. In 1713 he married, at Concord, Chester County, Pennsylvania, Elizabeth, daughter of Nathaniel Newlin, a Quaker "Irish gentleman in easy circumstances," from Mount Melick. A son by this marriage, Robert, was the father of Ellis the father of our David.

From a second marriage, with Mary Baldwin, Ellis became the ancestor of Ellis Lewis lately Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. But let us return to the descendants of the first marriage. A young Huguenot named Le Fevre, from the neighbourhood of Lyons, escaped from the dragoonades of Louis XIV., the only survivor of his household, into the Palatinate, and there met a widow, Madame Marie Ferrée, with her family, who had been driven from France in the same persecution. The desolation by the French army of the Palatinate, by order of the Minister Louvois, drove them to England to seek relief.

Queen Anne interested personally for these fugitives, and they were sent to America. At first to Esopus, on the Hudson, but finally they settled in the Piqued Valley, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Here the Ferrée family seated themselves in the midst of four

thousand acres of rich land, half of which they gained by purchase, while the remainder was bestowed upon them by William Penn. The greater part of this estate still remains in possession of their descendants. From this stock of Ferrée and Le Fevres came the mother of David, the subject of this memoir, mingled with a German element from the Black Forest, as her name of Deshler indicated (Table A.). Born, as before stated, in 1766 David was the eldest of four children. His father, Ellis son of Robert, died in 17—, and thus when the British occupied Philadelphia, in 1777, Mrs. Lewis (*née* Deshler) was a widow, surrounded by dependent children, the eldest being but about ten years of age. Mrs. Lewis's residence was on the west side of Second street above Spruce. Attached to the house was a large garden extending back to Laurel street and containing, at that time, two very tall Pine trees of the original forest, which could be seen when approaching the city from any quarter.*

* Mr. Townsend Ward, in his article entitled "South Second Street and its Associations" (Penn. Magazine, Vol. IV., No. 1, p. 49) gives the following interesting particulars regarding this house and its occupants: "Edward Shippen on coming here (Phila.) in 1693 erected his "great house." * * * William Penn, on his second visit

The state of war, and the troops, made a strong impression on a boy of ten, and in after life he would relate the difficulties and troubles through which his mother and her family were forced to pass. It was not unusual in those days to keep a milch cow, as well as carriage horses, in one's stable; but at this particular time it became necessary, in consequence of the presence of the British Commissary, to abandon that goodly practice, and to conceal the cow in the cellar. By such an under-ground dairy was Mrs. Lewis's family supplied with butter and cream, until the animal disclosed herself by lowing. After that the Commissary-General had fresh butter and cream for breakfast, while Mrs. Lewis went without. The presence of two armies, the British inside and the American on the outside of the city, had the effect of making provisions very scarce. Many were the devices attempted, and carried out, by

passed a month at the house, and not long after Lord Cornbury (Queen Anne's cousin) lodged and dined there. * * * Sir William Keith lived in the house, and a later Governor also, Denny, so that "the Governor's House" was for a long time its title. Still later the great house had come to be the residence of Ellis Lewis (whose widow with her son, the Daivid Lewis of this memoir, continued to reside there for many years). There is one authority who says that Earl Cornwallis was also there." P.S.P.C.

the residents of Philadelphia to obtain that ample supply of the good things of the earth which up to that time, and ever since, failed not to them. On one occasion, being very much straitened for supplies, Mrs. Lewis despatched an old nurse with the little boy, probably as a blind, in an old fashioned chair, on a visit to his uncle * at Pennypack, nine miles north-east of the city. The place was within the American lines, and this innocent equipage was suffered to pass and repass, at both the American and British posts, although the body of the vehicle was well filled with turkeys and flour.

A Hessian officer, Major Bauermeister, was quartered in Mrs. Lewis's house, and a son of General Knyphausen, who was a lieutenant, became a frequent visitor during the British occupation. The lieutenant was only thirteen years of age, and would often take off his sword and have a game of tag, in the garden, with David and his sisters, and would then resume his weapon and walk with them in the street, to convince them

* Colonel Robert Lewis, then commanding a "flying camp." His name occurs (in the committee from Phila. county) as member of the Provincial Conference in 1776. (Gordon's Hist. of Penna., Phila., 1829., pp. 528 and, Appendix, 626).

that the soldiers on guard would present arms to a boy. Another military visitor, the family had reason to remember. A British officer was quartered at Mrs. Morton's, a sister of Mrs. Lewis, who came frequently to see Major Bauermeister. This man was very rude and insolent to Mrs. Morton, which irritated Mrs. Lewis; and she desired the Major never to ask him to her house. The Major told him why he could not receive his visits, and this officer remembered his grudge in a sufficiently brutal manner. When the British army was retreating through Jersey, he went several miles out of his way to burn an Iron-works, belonging to Mrs. Lewis, at Mount Holly. When told that it was the property of a widow, he said—he knew whose it was very well, and that he had come for that reason. The Hessian Major was an agreeable gentleman, and propitiated his unwilling hosts by kindness, and little presents to the children, some of which still remain in the family.

The state of war does not appear to have interrupted young David's studies. His preceptor was Robert Proud, the historian of Pennsylvania, and his aptitude for learning was by no means contemptible. A copy-book, when he was twelve years old is still preserved,

written understandingly in Latin, in a fine round hand.* At that day, the standard of learning among the Quakers was high; as may be seen by the private library of James Logan, now a part of the Philadelphia Library, which in 1790 contained the most rare and valuable collection of books in the ancient languages on the American continent, embracing a complete set of the Greek and Latin Classics, to read which, fluently, was one of the requisites for the youth appointed by the deed of trust to the office of Librarian.

At a proper age, the subject of our memoir was placed in the counting-house of Isaac Wharton. Having served the customary apprenticeship, he was taken into partnership by Mr. Wharton. The firm lasted for many years. In 1803 an insurance company, The Phœnix, was established. Mr. Wharton was chosen President, and Mr. Lewis Vice-President. Upon the retirement of the first named gentleman, Mr. Lewis was chosen to succeed him, which he did, remaining from that time up to the period of his death, some thir-

* "The chirography of his (David Lewis's) translation of an Ode of Horace, still preserved, would put many a boy of our day to the blush." (Townsend Ward, Penna. Maga., Vol. IV., No. I, p. 50.)
P. S. P. C.

ty years, President of the Company. Together with the duties of the last named office, he continued his own mercantile pursuits.

On the breaking out of the Western, or Whiskey, insurrection, in 1794, the militia of the State was called out by the authorities to repress it.

The militia of Pennsylvania refused to march, while those of Alleghany County sided with the insurgents. This state of affairs made necessary a call on the militia of the neighboring state. Some of the merchants of Philadelphia, however, indignant at the refusal of the militia, without any previous concert, resolved to raise a corps to act against the malcontents. Issuing from the old Coffee House, with drum and fife, they marched round the town for volunteers. Mr. Lewis was in the movement, the success of which was instant. In a few days Macpherson's Blues were organized; a fine body of some four hundred men, all of character and position in their native city. To this corps Mr. Lewis was appointed Ensign, and as such marched with it to Pittsburgh. At Carlisle the combined army, amounting to some ten thousand men, was reviewed by General Washington. This show of force proved sufficient, the insurrection being quelled without blood-shed. An

epaulet, a military queue, and a silver teapot purchased with his pay, were the only relics of the expedition — except a rheumatism contracted in the winter-march of six hundred miles, partly over the Alleghany Mountains. His commission was issued on this occasion by the State Authorities; but in 1798, upon our rupture with France, he received one from the United States (numbered I.), appointing him a Lieutenant in a volunteer company accepted for service.

This last mentioned document is signed by John Adams, as President ; and is now tied up, very peacefully, with a commission from John Adams's old enemy, Lord North, appointing Mr. Lewis's father-in-law, Mr. Darch, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Somersetshire Regiment of Militia, in 1787.

Mr. Lewis's military doings were, most probably, the effect of his political feelings ; as he was an extreme Federalist and was always ready, in all things, to accept the full logical consequences of his opinions. His intimates had the same political creed, his brother-in-law, Robert Waln, being the Representative of that party, for Philadelphia, in Congress from the adoption of the constitution until the removal of the seat of government from Philadelphia, in 1801. During this period

his native city contained but about thirty thousand inhabitants, and though the number increased during his life to four hundred thousand, yet among the thirty thousand were included many who, in point of cultivated refinement and polish, could not have been equalled among the larger number. The tone and influence of the men of the Revolution, of what may almost be called the Court of Washington, with Congress, the foreign Embassies, and the French emigrants (Talleyrand, Louis Philippe for instance), in a small city, gave a brilliancy and colour to society which has gradually faded and gone out with hair-powder, ruffles, and silk stockings. Since then, the material wealth of the city has increased wonderfully ; but it may well be doubted whether the development of mind and soul has been in any proportion, or that the true purpose and philosophy of life are any better understood.

In 179—Mr. Lewis married an English lady, Mary, daughter of Thomas Darch, Esq., of Netherclay House, near Hull Bishops, in Somersetshire. Mr. Darch was Lieutenant-Colonel of the Somersetshire Regiment of Militia, his Colonel being Edmund, Earl of Cork, and Mr. Darch was also, with his eldest son, in the commission of the peace for the county. He was a gentle-

man of considerable landed estate, and, as Mr. Paul Beck informed the writer, entertained George III., in his progress on the coast of England, during the agitations produced by the beginning of the French Revolution. The results of this revolution ruined Mr. Darch, and he came to the United States with the wreck of his fortune, and in company with Dr. Priestly and the families of Grant, Hepburn, Hunter, Humphreys, and De Grouchy. His place of settlement was on the Susquehannah, near Northumberland, Pennsylvania. His family brought with them a piano—certainly the first ever seen in that region, and, moreover, probably the first ever brought to America; since this instrument was of later date than the spinet. The people of the country would offer a bushel of wheat to hear the wonder played on!

The happiness of Mr. Lewis's married life was only interrupted by the loss of children, until it was terminated in 1819 by the death of his wife. This sad event seemed greatly hastened by the grief which afflicted her, on the death of her eldest son. Of the remaining children, a son and three daughters still live (1876). Mr. Lewis survived his wife twenty-one years, cherishing her memory for that long time by love and

care for their children.

During the greater part of his life, Mr. Lewis was actively engaged in mercantile pursuits, undisturbed by any remarkable occurrences : his intelligence, integrity, and liberality winning him the respect and attachment of his fellow citizens.

His inclination to hospitality seldom left his family without a sudden guest at the dinner-table, and his impulse to kindness on one occasion nearly cost him his life,—from an attempt to catch a workman falling from a roof of a house, the saving of whom would have involved his own destruction. In person, Mr. Lewis was five feet ten inches in height, and was thought very handsome—especially in his youth, when he was slender. In middle-age, he became stouter ; but his clear eye, ruddy complexion, fine features, aquiline nose, complete teeth, genial, and I may say noble, expression, with his old-soldiery carriage, would have made him noticeable in any presence. His face was but the expression of his mind—just, true, tender and bold; somewhat impulsive, but without concealment, and without suspicion, hating only meanness. He went through life loving and beloved, and passed away from it supported by an earnest, though quiet, Christian faith through a

tedious and painful sickness, not simply resigned but cheerful, his usual bright humor breaking out even in taking his last leave of his young grandchildren.

“ I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest; gray eyes lit up
With summer-lightnings of a soul
So full of summer-warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear, and whole:
His memory scarce can make me sad.”

This notice was originally begun for insertion in the “Lives of Eminent Philadelphians,” at the request of the editor of that work; but, having been delayed until too late for that book, it is now completed for what perhaps is a more useful purpose;—to hold up an example to his descendants, whose inheritance his good name should be, of one from whom the writer hopes they will not degenerate, of one who so well illustrated the motto of his race:—

“ Y gwir yn erbyn y byd.”
(Truth against the World.)

MEMORANDA

IN RELATION TO
THE FAMILIES OF FERRÉE AND LE FEVRE,
FORMERLY OF FRANCE, SUBSEQUENTLY OF
LANCASTER CO., PENNA.

"**M**adam Mary Ferrée,* a widow Lady of distinction, arrived in that country, in 1704 or 1705, from France, having, with her three sons and three daughters, come to this country to seek a peaceful asylum from the persecutions of her own country, following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes: † her husband having fallen a victim by massacre at the time of the revocation of that decree.

* Her maiden name was Marie Warrimber. She married Jean Le Fiere, of which latter name Ferrée is an Anglicized form. Some presume that her husband's name was Le Verrier, but I am inclined to think that this is a mistake and that Le Fiere is the correct original. (Vide Address of Redmond Conyngham delivered at Paradise, Lancaster Co., Penna., July 4th, 1842.) P. S. P. C.

† From want of connection with preceding matter, the above ac-

"She first went to England, where she was noticed by Queen Anne, and meeting there with William Penn she was encouraged by him, as well as by the Queen, to embark for this country. William Penn gave her two thousand acres of land, and, recommending her particularly to his Agent, she purchased after her arrival two thousand acres more; and in this way became possessed of four thousand acres of the best land in Piqua Valley, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

"The name of Madaine Ferrée is still remembered and revered in the neighbourhood where she lived and died, and where her remains lie, having before her death conveyed to Trustees a piece of land, for a Burial Ground, in the vicinity of the present village of Paradise.

"One of the daughters of Madame Ferrée, named Catharine, intermarried with a young man of the name of Le Fevre, who emigrated to this country in 1689; and from this union sprung all of the name of Lefevre in Lancaster County. David Deshler, of Philadelphia,

count is certainly somewhat confusing. What is meant to be conveyed is, I presume, simply this: M'me. Ferrée being driven from France, by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, repaired to England and thence to America. From an other account she appears also to have visited Germany. (p. 19, also p. 4.). P. S. P. C.

married Mary Lefevre, daughter of Isaac and Catharine Lefevre, who are the ancestors of Elizabeth Canby on the maternal side.

"The substance of the preceding is taken from 2d, vol., Watson's "Annals;" but I have a more particular account of the Lefevre family sent me by a son of Jos. Lefevre, of Lancaster County.

November 6. 1844,

(signed) E. Canby."

"Mary, the mother of Daniel Ferrée, (lost her husband in Germany) accompanied by her children, and armed with a spirit of resolution superior to her sex, went to London, from thence to Kensington, where William Penn resided to be near Queen Anne, of whom he was decidedly a favourite. Madam Ferrée made her wishes known to him: William Penn sympathized with her in her misfortunes, and became interested for her and introduced her to Queen Anne. The Queen was delighted, in thus being afforded an opportunity, to display the natural feelings of her heart. Lodgings were obtained for Madame Ferrée in the vicinity, until a vessel was ready to sail to New York."

"Undoubtedly Isaac Le Fevre, who married Catharine the daughter of Mary Ferrée, and who settled within the limits of this (Lancaster) County at the time D. Ferrée did, was born in 1669, and in 1686 came to Philadelphia from Esopus. He married Catharine soon after his arrival, he was but a youth when he left his "pays natal" — father-land. Mr. C —, * in an eloquent address on the early settlement of the Piqua Valley (July 4th, 1842), speaking of the Ferrée family says: 'And now let me turn your attention to a youth of fourteen, his parents had perished in the religious wars which desolated France. An orphan, friendless, he travelled through Holland and to London, came to Kensington where he made known his intentions to William Penn. Alone! oh no! he had one companion, it was his consolation in Europe, it was his comforter in Pennsylvania, that companion was his Bible. That young man was Isaac Le Fevre, that Bible is still preserved by the family of Le Fevre as a most precious relic.' "

* Evidently, Mr. Redmond Conyngham, note * on page 17. P.S.P.C.

COMMISSIONS.

N. B.—The spelling, punctuation, and etc., of the following Commissions are given as in the original documents.

G O M M I S S I O N

OF

D A V I D L E W I S .

No. I

John Adams, President of the United States of America. To all who shall see these Presents,Greeting:

Know Ye,

That reposing, special Trust and Confidence, in the Patriotism, Valør, Fidelity, and Abilities of David Lewis ; I do hereby, in pursuance of the authority, by Law in me vested, for that purpose, appoint, and commission him to be a Lieutenant of a company of volunteer Infantry in the Provisional Army, who have associated, at the city of Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania, and offered themselves, for the service of the United States, which company, I have accepted of, by virtue of "An Act authorising the President of the United States to raise a Provisional Army." He is, therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge the duty

of a Lieutenant, by doing and performing all manner of things, thereunto belonging.

And I do strictly charge, and require, all Officers and Soldiers, under his command, to be obedient to his orders, as Lieutenant, and he is to observe and follow, such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future President of the United States of America, or the General, or other Superior Officers set over him, according to the Rules and Discipline of War.

Given under my Hand, at Philadelphia this eighteenth day of June in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Eight, and in the twenty second year of the independence of the United States.

By command of the President John Adams.
of the United States of America.

James Mc Henry
Secretary of War.

Registered.
John Caldwell.
Ch. Clk. War Deptm't.

IN the Name, and by the Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,

Thomas Mifflin, Governor of the said Commonwealth,

To David Lewis of the City of Philadelphia, Greeting:

By virtue of the power to me given by an act of the General Assembly entitled "An Act to provide for Suppressing an Insurrection in the Western Counties of this Commonwealth."

Know that you, the said David Lewis are hereby Commissioned Ensign of the Second Company of Major Mc Pherson's Battalion of Volunteers raised for the Expedition against the Western Insurgents from the Militia of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. To have and to hold this Commission, exercising all the powers, and discharging all the duties thereto lawfully belonging and attached, until the same shall cease or be lawfully made void.

In Testimony whereof, I have set my Hand, and caused the great Seal of the said State to be affixed to these Presents, at Philadelphia the Ninth Day of October in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven

Hundred and Ninety Four and of the Commonwealth
the Nineteenth.

Signed.

Thomas Mifflin.
Governor.

A. J. Dallas.
Secretary.

F I N I S .

T A B L E A.

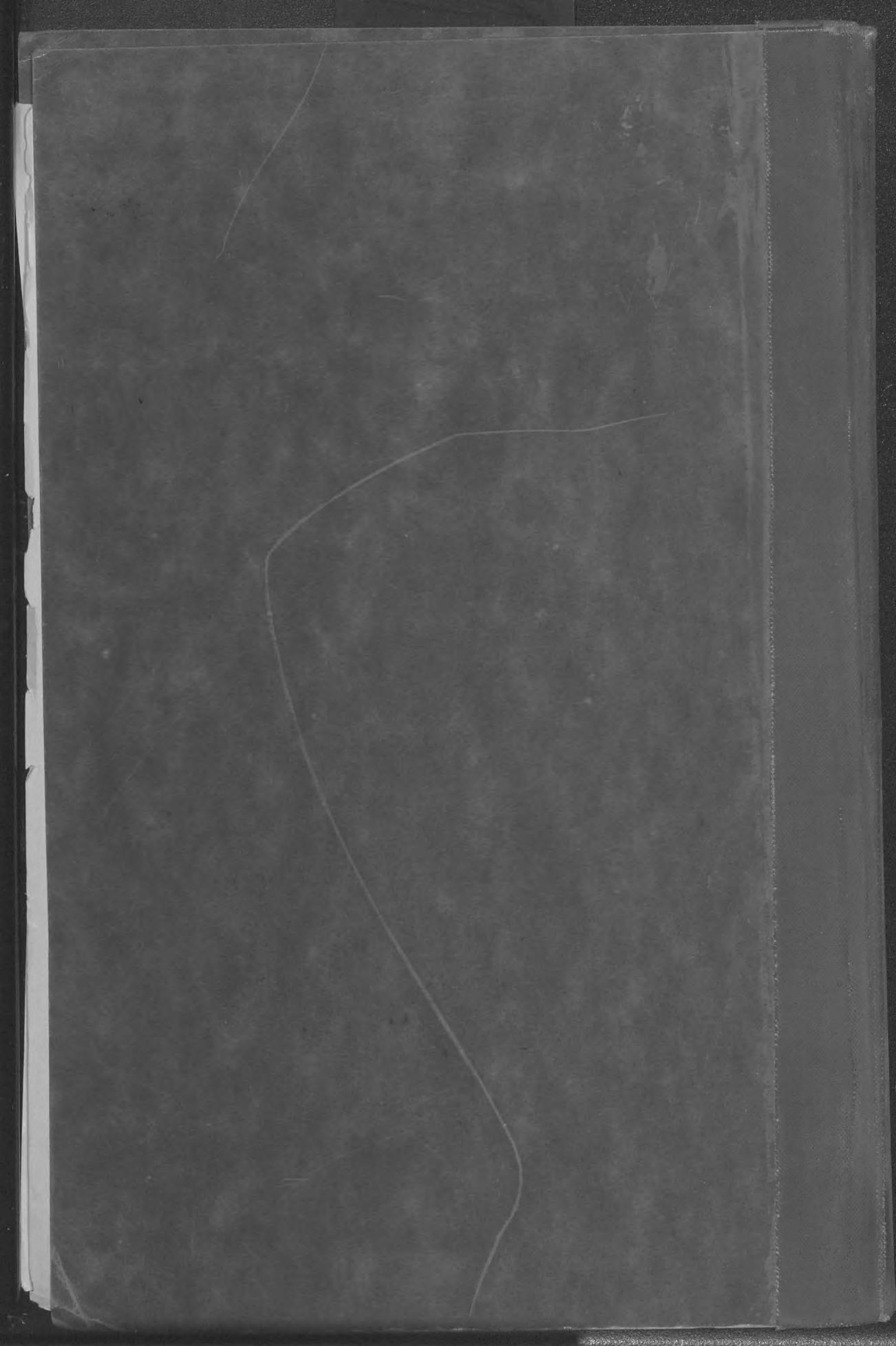
Isaac Lefevre (born in 1669, came to America in 1686) married Catharine, daughter of Madame Ferrée. Their eldest son is stated to have been the first child, of European parentage, born in the Piquea Valley, Lancaster Co., Pa.

Their daughter,

Mary Lefevre, married David Deshler, of Philada., and had a daughter,

Mary Deshler, who married (June 16, 1763) Ellis Lewis (she was his second wife) and had:—

David Lewis, of this Memoir.



David Lewis:

BORN AT PHILADELPHIA JULY 9, 1766;
DIED, APRIL 28, 1840.

IN the following notice the writer presumes, that, from the social connection of the infancy of our city, these memoirs may take the shape in some degree of family records, and that therefore it may be allowable, in spite of the Horatian precept not to begin the Siege of Troy with Leda's egg, to go back to ancestry and origin, and even to the causes that assembled on the banks of the Delaware, from many lands, those who had left home and country, through impatience of injustice and oppression, and had found a common asylum across the sea.

In the instance of Mr. Lewis, the character of his forefathers in some measure moulded his own; and the traditions of their motives seem most properly a part of the record of his life, as they were of his thoughts